

Grape Entomologist Emil Frederick Taschenberg Remembered

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By John Zakour

GENEVA, NY: Cornell University professor emeritus Emil Frederick Taschenberg, former research director of the Taschenberg Laboratory at the Vineyard Research Lab in Fredonia, NY, died on Tuesday, Feb. 5, in Clearwater, Fla. Taschenberg specialized in grape entomology and was extremely well respected by New York grape growers.

Taschenberg received his Ph.D. in entomology from Cornell University in 1945. He began work in Fredonia in 1939 as a temporary assistant, became an assistant professor in 1945, an associate professor in 1948, and a full professor in 1960. He was granted the status of professor emeritus in 1983, when he retired. Taschenberg served as director of the Fredonia Lab from 1945 to 1983. His research focused on the biology, ecology and control of minor and major insect pests of grape. After World War II, he extracted many new insecticides that had become available and designed effective treatment programs that were followed religiously and with great confidence by New York grape growers. In 1991, the main laboratory building at the Fredonia research station was renamed the "Taschenberg Lab" in his honor.



Emil Frederick Taschenberg

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"Tash was one of the hardest working entomologists I know," said Wendell Roelofs, Liberty Hyde Bailey Professor of Insect Biochemistry, a close collaborator

of Taschenberg's, and the current chairman of the entomology department at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY. "He was one of those guys who would give 150 percent effort as a collaborator. We had a number of projects with him using pheromones for monitoring and control of several grape pests. He conducted huge field trials for us that went well beyond the responsibilities he had in his faculty position as a grape entomologist. He also was very interested in basic research on pheromone systems of exotic insects, including the large cecropia moth. He devoted a lot of time and effort in rearing insects for projects that others had found nearly impossible to rear in the laboratory.

"My collaborative projects with Tasch were among the first I had when I came to Cornell," added Roelofs. "I loved it when he came to Geneva from Fredonia to discuss the research-usually over a huge dinner at Pronti's where he would put down the equivalent of three dinners. In addition to the projects on pheromones, however, he was THE grape entomologist for the whole state. He served the grape industry extremely well with his studies on the biology and control of grape insect pests. Everyone respected him and trusted that he would have the best possible control measures for these pests. He will be remembered by all his friends as a man who truly served his clientele and made a difference."

"I'm sure the thing most remembered about Tasch by growers, industry representatives, and the Lab staff was his work ethic," said Rick Dunst, research support specialist at Fredonia. "Fred was at work early in the morning every day and worked long hours. It was not at all unusual to see him at work early on a weekend or holiday, applying experimental treatments or putting out insect traps. He worked primarily on control of the grape berry moth, Eastern grape leafhopper, and currant borer-all major pests at the time. He also was instrumental in the design and refinement of a hooded boom sprayer for vineyards that applied materials effectively and reduced pesticide drift compared with conventional sprayers. Many, many growers knew Tasch personally. His advice was widely sought and well respected. He was a hard worker dedicated to his research and the grape industry, but he would drop what he was doing when a grower came in to seek his advice," Dunst added.

Taschenberg's memberships included the Entomological Society of America and Sigma Xi. He enjoyed golfing and was an avid fisherman. He had many mounted specimens at the Fredonia Lab that he donated to the Buffalo Museum of Science after his retirement.

Taschenberg is survived by his wife, Shirley (Smith) Taschenberg of Hudson Fla;

two daughters, Ellen Marle Minor of Clearwater and Sharon E. Taschenberg of Lafayette, Calif; a brother Ernest J Taschenburg of Baltimore, three grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Calling hours will be Monday, Feb. 11, from 7-9 pm in the Larson-Timko Funeral Home, 20 Central Ave., in Fredonia. Graveside services will be held Tuesday, Feb. 12, at 11 a.m. in Forest Hill Cemetery at 57 Lambert Ave., in Fredonia.

Memorial contributions may be made to the National Parkinson's Foundation, P.O. Box 450, Huntington Valley, PA 19006. Contributions in Taschenberg's name may also be made to the entomology graduate student fund established in honor of former Geneva entomologist Mike Villani, who died last year. They can be sent to The Mike Villani Fund, Cornell University, Development Office, 272 Roberts Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853

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